PDConnection
Linking Practitioners and Resources

**Out of the Box and
Into a New Framework:**
Technological Literacy

"There is nothing to fear but fear itself."
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Summer 2008

Introduction

The Future is Now: Technological Literacy

Maybe some of you remember the "olden days" of teaching. The days of typewriters, stencils in black ink and the smell of the mimeograph forms with their own bluish purple color. Lessons were primarily taught using pen and loose leaf paper. Being innovative was having a green chalk board with yellow chalk. Some of these tools are still serviceable while others have morphed into the 21st century of communicating via technology.

In today's world, students are savvy with iPods, Nintendo Wii, text messaging, blogging and even creating Web sites. Adult students are among the growing cyber culture having to use technology in the work place. How do we prepare students and teachers alike to integrate this new literacy? What strategies are working when we take literacy online? These questions and more are discussed in this issue of *PD Connection*. Read how blogging was used to inspire a group from Rockcastle County, how using the Smart Board was a smart move in LaRue County and learn about the READ KY first-year survey.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Ready or not, the future and technology is now.

It's Called L-I-F-E!

by Tonya Crum, Director, Workforce Development and Training

Adult students have always faced a big obstacle on their road to a GED. It's called L-I-F-E, and there is often so much of it—children, jobs, bills, social responsibilities, everyday chores—that it's hard to schedule another thing in, even something as important as education. Today, however, new technologies are giving students the ability to schedule their education around their lives instead of their lives around their education. That's especially true in Kentucky, where students are now using video on demand (VOD) and video streaming will be available at www.ket.org later this summer. Video on demand is associated with cable television and digital video recorders such as TiVos. Using VOD enables viewers to watch shows on their own schedule rather than the network's. The same show can be viewed repeatedly, and viewers can also pause, rewind and fast forward the show. The same holds true for video streaming, which allows anyone with a computer and Internet access to view programs on their computer screen. Now *GED Connection* is part of the VOD lineup on Insight Communications in Kentucky. "Before students were tied to the

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- Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE)
- Adult Education Academy for Professional Development
- Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD)
- Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy

It's Called L-I-F-E! continued

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>
> "Now they can click a few buttons and get the exact program they need exactly when they need it."

Broadcast schedule," says Tonya Crum, director of workforce development at Kentucky Educational Television (KET). "If they needed a science program and we were broadcasting math, they had to wait. It could be as long as 10 weeks before math was broadcast again. Now they can click a few buttons and get the exact program they need exactly when they need it. Teachers were tied to the schedule as well if they wanted to assign homework. While they had tapes and DVDs to use in the classroom, students often didn't have access to these at home." Crum says the other benefit of the new technologies is that they help teachers offer learning in a variety of ways. "We've used workbooks, videotapes and DVDs," she says, but now we can incorporate videostreams into our online lessons."

The Pew American Life Survey (2006 & 2007) found that 88% of adults aged 18-49 access online resources on a regular basis and 40% of these adults are non-high school graduates. An astounding 72% of adults who use the Internet at home have broadband access, and the total number of households with broadband is at an all time high of 42%. The 2007 Pew survey on usage found that 22% of Internet users are doing so to access educational services. VOD and videostreaming can help answer some of the access issues students' face and then help them reach their goals. While these new technologies offer new opportunities to reach adult students, they do require a significant investment of time to put together partnerships and work out technical needs.

 In Kentucky, GED *Connection* test preparation series has been available on VOD through Insight Communications since September 2007 and averages 300 orders each month. Meanwhile, although it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to get the services established, many believe VOD and videostreaming are well worth it because of the potential to reach more adults. And now those adults won't have to choose between their life and an education that will help them create a better one. For more information, see the On Demand information at www.ket.org/education/gedconnection.

By The Numbers

Adults Use of Technology

88% access online resources regularly

40% of these are non-high school graduates

72% use broadband access at home

22% access educational services

-from Pew American Life Survey, 2006-2007

Blogs Increase Writing Skills And Interest

**by Keith Gilbertson, Christian Appalachian Project,
Adult Learning Center Rockcastle County**

Christina was asked to write a short story about something unusual that happened at home. She sat down at the computer and slowly typed a great story. The title was "How the Computer Saved Riley and Her Pups". Riley is Christina's little Jack Russell dog who was having a difficult time delivering her pups. Christina was not a veterinarian nor a computer whiz but she Googled "how to deliver puppies". Her family began relaying instructions and the pups were born in fine health. To Christina, her computer became a lifesaving tool.

Here is where blogging enters the picture. It was such a good story that I wanted all of Christina's classmates to read it. There were about 40 women in Christina's group who had been laid off from a sewing factory and were taking college preparation classes at the Christian Appalachian Project's Adult Learning Center in Rockcastle County. Rather than print the story we decided to post it on a blog called www.rockcastle.blogspot.com. The story is now available to the world and Christina remarked, "I reckon I'm famous."

The word blog conjures up a variety of images for people who are unfamiliar with them. Some think they are for teenagers with plenty of time to waste. School systems block them because they lump them with "MySpace" and other friend networks. At our learning center we use blogs to encourage writing and to share on a free and readily accessible Web page.

> **The learning center uses blogs to encourage writing and to share on a free and readily accessible Web page**.

From Christina's first story we branched out to posting assignments on the blog. When students entered the computer lab they were directed to the blog which listed a writing topic for the day. In the course of two hours, students used Microsoft Word to type a story, edit it for spelling and grammar and then e-mail it to the teacher.

As the teacher, I reviewed each assignment with the student and sometimes the entire class. Once the writer was mostly satisfied with their work, I copied and pasted from the e-mail and then posted it on the blog. There were a variety of topics including, idioms e.g., "all in the same boat", famous quotes, and Kentucky history research. Later we expanded the blogs to include many more options: see www.kywriting07.blogspot.com.

Linda was another member of the class who said, "I cannot write." With some encouragement she decided to write about making a quilt. Linda labored over it because she wanted it to look the very best if everyone was going to read it on the blog. After a great deal of effort she was satisfied and let us post it. Once it appeared on the big screen with a couple of her own photos she was extremely pleased and eager to tell everyone in her family the blog address. Linda came back to our computer lab not long ago and proudly showed me some of her college writing.

For three months in a writing class of displaced workers with very limited computer experience we set the paper and pens aside and did everything with computers including sharing almost all writing on a variety of blogs. Blogs are open to the creativity of teachers and students alike. Contact Keith at keithalc06@yahoo.com.

Learning to Love Technology Smart Board Style

by Melcenia Sprowles-Shelton, Family Literacy Instructor, LaRue County

When Franklin Roosevelt stated, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," he had obviously never been confronted by a scary, large Smart Board in his adult education classroom! Even before the Smart Board arrived, I panicked. I didn't know what it was but I knew it involved the use of a computer. Computers and I have never been the best of friends. I knew I would have to become more comfortable and confident in the use of the computer in order to be able to use this technology.

In many ways, my fear of technology mirrors that of my students. I grew up with the trusty typewriter and adding machine. As I furthered my education, I became somewhat familiar with computers and could perform simple tasks that I needed in my career. I completed my first PowerPoint presentation and learned to attach documents to e-mail when I participated in Kentucky Adult Educators Literacy Institute! I preserved though and eventually have at least learned to appreciate what technology can bring to the classroom.

Knowing my fear and limited exposure to computers, I made it a point to incorporate the use of the computer in the classroom with my adult education and family literacy students. At first they were reluctant to use the computer in any way but by planning different activities that involved the computer, their comfort level increased as well as my own. I guess you could say we have learned together and this has helped relieve my fears and the fears of the students as well.

When the Smart Board was installed, I made it my goal to begin using it immediately—why postpone the inevitable? To my surprise, I learned the Smart Board is a valuable tool in my daily instruction. In addition to Internet lessons and class research, I use it to present the key points of a lesson. The students benefit because they can hear the lesson that is presented and also "see" the lesson. This visual aid assists in their taking notes from the lesson and provides them with their own review materials to do their homework.

The students particularly enjoy using the Smart Board to do math problems. Sometimes students have a question about their homework and they want to use the board to "show" me. They can usually see where they made their mistakes. One day I was demonstrating how to borrow when subtracting fractions. The students had a puzzled look on their faces and I asked if they had any questions. One student responded saying that she could show me an easier way to do the same thing. I asked her to share her method on the Smart Board with the class and she did.

> "Learning is not a spectator sport."
> *D. Blocher*

The Smart Board provides the option to write directly onto the screen with markers or typing on the keyboard. It can convert handwritten notes to type or save it as written. All lessons can be saved and retrieved as reviews at the end of the session or unit. I use this technology everyday in some form in my class.

While I'm still fearful of PDA's and Blackberries, I'm confident that if it can help my students learn better, I can face my fears and learn to use all the technology tools that come my way!

Technology Accommodations

by Trish Schneider, Special Programs Coordinator/EES, JCPS Adult and Continuing Education

The transitions program in Jefferson County Adult Education relies heavily on the use of computer-assisted instruction. Over the years, we have found simple ways to accommodate students. When possible, we dedicate one computer to students in need of accommodations posted with a visible sign over the monitor. This is usually a work station that is most easily accessed by someone in a wheelchair. Also, we sometimes have the luxury of using a larger monitor at this work station as well as an ergonomic mouse. We set this computer's settings for those with low vision and/or hearing impairment.

Even if you cannot dedicate a computer for this purpose, changing a computer's settings for an individual student's need is quite easy. To change the computer for a student with low vision, click on **My Computer** on the desktop. Click on **Control Panel**. Click on **Accessibility Options**. Click on the **Display** tab. Check the box next to **Use High Contrast**. This will change the screen to black and increase the size of the font. Also under **Accessibility Options**, you can click the **Sound** tab to turn on **Sound Sentry** and/or **ShowSounds** for hearing-impaired students. These tools use visual cues such as captions and flashing screens to alert the student that the computer is using sound to convey information and offers an alternative visual way of communicating the information.

This fast and simple change allow students with disabilities to fully participate in computer activities their fellow students are engaged in and lets them know technology is equally available to them.
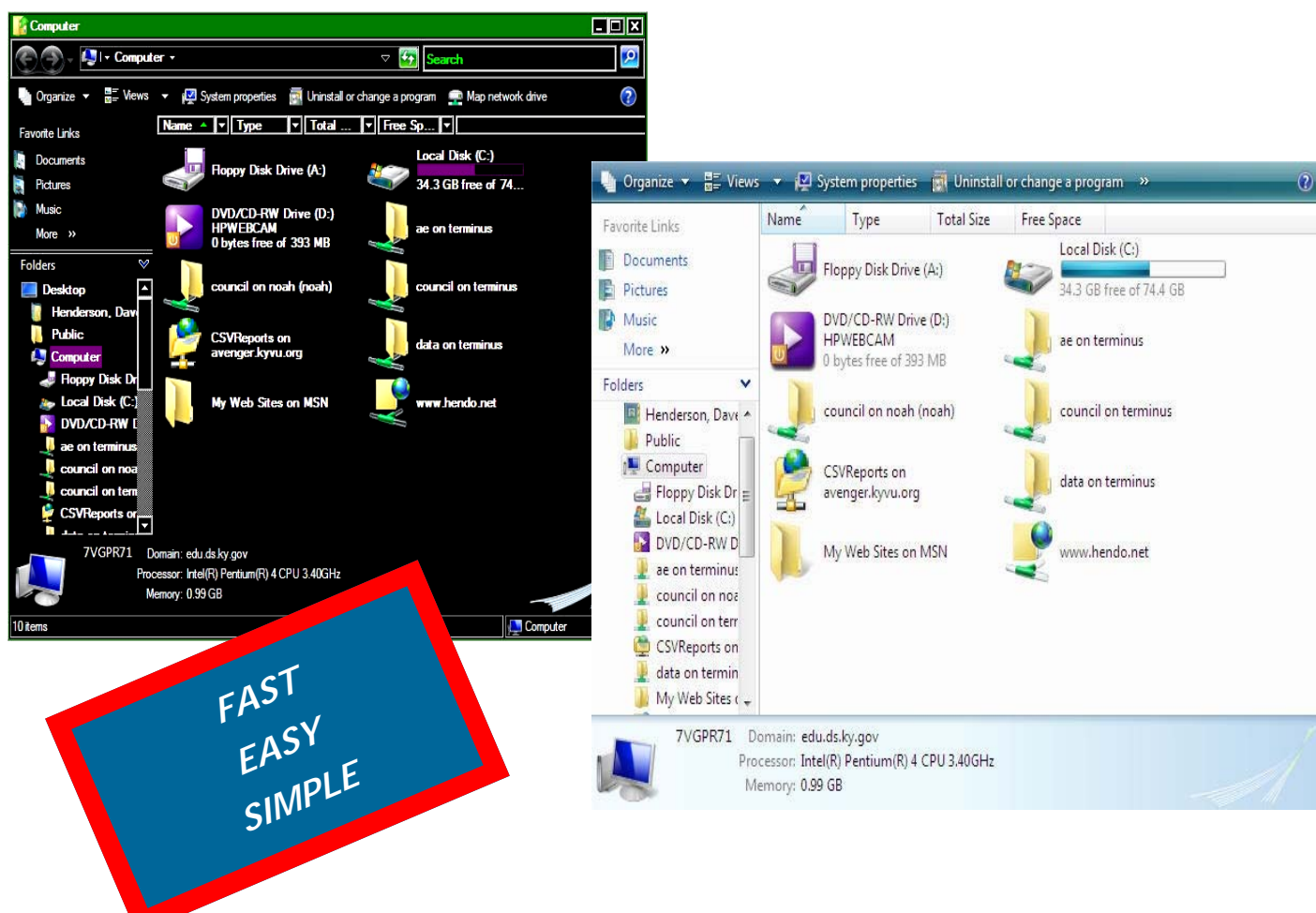
READ KY

by Dawn Hanzel, Adult Literacy Director, Collaborative Center for Literacy Development

The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) is excited to announce a new initiative focused on improving adult literacy through out the Commonwealth. Prepared to begin its second year of implementation, READ KY is implementing and evaluating six models using software reading programs to increase reading skills of adult literacy students who test below a 5th grade equivalency specifically focusing on non-readers. READ KY is an acronym for Read, Empower, Achieve, and Dream. The initiative also hopes to explore the results of offering services to adult literacy students in non-traditional environments. The funding for this project was received during the 2006 legislative session through the bi-partisan efforts of Senators Brett Guthrie and Dan Kelly and Representative Jody Richards.

According to the State Assessment of Adult Literacy Survey (SAALS), 11% of Kentuckians demonstrate skills below the basic levels of literacy. This population of adult literacy students requires time intensive tutoring. Tutors are difficult to recruit, train and retain. Literacy students at the below basic levels are difficult to recruit and retain as well.

During the first year, six sites were piloted using two different approaches; three sites using software with a facilitator-led approach and three sites using the software in an instructor-led approach supplements the software curriculum with an instructor trained in adult literacy. Three comprehensive software programs were tested this past fiscal year. A fourth will be added this year.

A few of the lessons learned from the piloted sites in the first year include: 1) an identification of various software strengths and weaknesses 2) assisting adult students in overcoming fears of computer use 3) the type of instructional intervention needed to support students using the software 4) instructor/facilitator qualifications and 5) effective marketing, recruitment and retention strategies. Over the next two fiscal years, READ KY will continue to examine data evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the software products and how they need to be supplemented, identify non-traditional sites to attract literacy students and determine the professional development needs of the facilitator or instructor. CCLD will then recommend a model that may be scaled and replicated through out Kentucky. To learn more about this project, please visit www.kentuckyliteracy.org.

Assistive Technologies for Literacy Learning

by Dr. Pam Petty, Associate Professor of Literacy, Western Kentucky University

Dr. Pamela Petty, Associate Professor of Literacy in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Western Kentucky University and former KAELI director, recommends assistive technologies information at http://www.pampetty.com/assistivetechno.htm. This Web link provides information on different types of assistive technologies currently available for adult literacy students. Dr. Petty provides pricing and function descriptions in an easy to read format. You may contact her at pamela.petty@wku.edu or visit her Web site at http://www.pampetty.com.

Upcoming Events

For more event information and registration, please visit PDtrack at https://pdtrack.kyvae.org .

Events	Location	Date
Foundations in Reading and Writing	Laurel Co. Adult Education Center	June 26 & 27, 2008
Reading Diagnostics: ADRI/ARCS	Gateway Community and Technical College Boone Co. Campus	June 27, 2008
WIN for Instructors	Web Conference	June 27, 2008
WIN for Instructors	Web Conference	August 08, 2008
LiteracyLink Goes Digital	Kentucky Educational Television, Lexington	September 05, 2008

F.Y.I.

Additional Resources

Title	Online Access
About (Resources for adult educators)	http://adulted.about.com/cs/education/index.htm
Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse	http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/default.asp
Adult Learner Persistence Project	http://www.adultlearnerpersistence.org/login.cfm
American Council on Education-GED	http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home
Florida TechNet Marketplace Lesson Plans	http://www.floridatechnet.org/marketplace.html
Reading Skills Tool Kit	http://www.marshalladulteducation.org/resources.htm http://www.marshalladulteducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm
International Children's Digital Library	http://www.icdlbooks.org/

Do you have additional resources you would like to share?

If so, please send an e-mail to deborah.daugherty@uky.edu.